

HOUR OF MEETING ON TUESDAY,  
MARCH 3, 1998

Mr. SOLOMON. I would also ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns on Monday, March 2, 1998, it adjourn to meet at 12:30 p.m. on Tuesday, March 3, for morning hour debates.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request from the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

#### DISPENSING WITH CALENDAR WEDNESDAY BUSINESS ON WEDNESDAY NEXT

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the business in order under the Calendar Wednesday rule be dispensed with on Wednesday next.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT REGARDING AMENDMENTS TO H.R. 3130, CHILD SUPPORT PERFORMANCE AND INCENTIVE ACT OF 1988

(Mr. SOLOMON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, I ask for this time for the purpose of making an announcement.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to inform the House of the Committee on Rules' plans in regard to H.R. 3130, the Child Support Performance and Incentive Act of 1998.

The bill was ordered reported by the Committee on Ways and Means on February 25, and the report is expected to be filed in the House on Friday, February 27, tomorrow.

The Committee on Rules will meet next week to grant a rule which may require that amendments to H.R. 3130, the Child Support Performance and Incentive Act of 1998, be preprinted in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. Amendments to be preprinted would need to be signed by the Member and submitted at the Speaker's table.

Members should use the Office of Legislative Counsel to ensure that their amendments are properly drafted and should check the Office of the Parliamentarian to be certain that their amendments comply with the rules of the House.

Mr. Speaker, this is intended to be an open rule, but there could be the preprinting requirement, and I just wanted to make sure that the Members understood that. This is a good bill, and we should take it up early next week.

#### REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 235

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to

have the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BARRETT) removed as a cosponsor from H.R. 235, the War Crimes Disclosure Act.

His name was added inadvertently due to a clerical error, while the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. BARRETT) should have been added as a cosponsor.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

#### URGING MEMBERS TO SUPPORT RESOLUTION REQUESTING POSTAL SERVICE TO ISSUE STAMP HONORING THE UNITED STATES SUBMARINE FORCE ON ITS 100TH ANNIVERSARY

(Mr. GEJDENSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GEJDENSON. Mr. Speaker, the year 2000 is the 100th anniversary of our submarine fleet. The Postal Service recently made what I believe was a serious error in rejecting a postal stamp. There were several options out there that would make a stamp that would have high demand in this country.

I ask my colleagues to join me in a resolution that will be supported by the chairman of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and original cosponsor of this resolution. They will join President Carter, Defense Secretary Cohen, and Navy Secretary Dalton in support of having the Postal Service reconsider an earlier decision that turned down a submarine stamp.

We have but two possibilities here. Here is a second one. But what is most important, when we look at the number of stamps that are being produced, from cartoon figures to actors, it seems to me that a service that has been critical and vital to the survival of the United States and its freedoms, with so many Americans giving their lives in service, that they need to be recognized on this 20th anniversary. I hope all of my colleagues will join us in supporting this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, this morning I rise in support of the hundreds of thousands of Americans who have patrolled beneath the oceans to keep us free.

Today I will introduce a resolution urging the Postal Service to reconsider its earlier decision and issue a commemorative postage stamp honoring the United States Submarine Force on its 100th anniversary in the year 2000.

In December, the Postal Service made a mistake in turning down the request on the ground that the stamps might not have wide commercial appeal. The Americans who spent over 200 million dollars to see the Hunt for Red October and Crimson Tide at the movies would beg to differ. As would the over three million Americans who have visited the Nautilus museum in Groton, Connecticut, since it opened in 1986.

Even more importantly, this decision should be reversed on the merits of heroism. With

only 2% of navy personnel during World War II, the U.S. submarine force destroyed 55% of all Japanese shipping. And we can never forget the 3,800 submariners who have given their lives to this country in the line of duty.

From the Navy's first submarine, USS Holland, to the latest due for commissioning this year as USS Connecticut, there is much of which we have to be proud. We can think of few better ways in which to honor the Submarine Force's 100 years than through this commemoration.

I am honored to have the Chairman of the Veterans Affairs Committee among the original co-sponsors of this resolution. They join former President Carter, Defense Secretary Cohen, and Navy Secretary Dalton in calling on the Postal Service to reconsider its earlier decision.

I ask all members of this House to join me and put the full weight of this body behind the men and women who have served this nation as part of the United States Submarine Force.

#### RETHINKING THE SAFETY NET FOR AMERICAN FAMILIES

(Mr. LEWIS of Kentucky asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks and include extraneous matter.)

Mr. LEWIS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about an issue we have dealt with here in Congress and in the Family Caucus, of which I am chairman, and that is, "Rethinking the Safety Net" for American families.

The article that I want to talk about was published over a year ago, but still it has merit in answering the question of government's role in developing and strengthening families.

The author, Mr. Butler, calls for several reforms which have already been implemented, reforms in areas such as adoption laws, in tax relief, and welfare. However, the theme of the article is still very applicable and relevant to today's debate about the role of government in American families.

"Rethinking the Safety Net" states what many of us here in Congress have concluded, that government has done more damage than good for the American family. Mr. Butler points to many areas to prove this point, including the high burden of taxes, the dependency of entire generations on welfare, and how the decline of religion in this country is partly due to government actions.

This article about rethinking the safety net tells us the current safety net of government programs is not working. The true safety net consists of social institutions like family and religion. Therefore, Congress should promote programs that strengthen the family, rather than weakening it.

When Congress debates how to best implement and create social programs, let us keep in mind that communities and families are the most important areas to look at.

Mr. Butler shows us how programs created by Congress have had an adverse impact in the past. Let's not make the same mistakes again.

Mr. Speaker, I include for the RECORD the article by Mr. Butler.

The material referred to is as follows:

RETHINKING THE SAFETY NET

(By Stuart M. Butler)

#### INTRODUCTION

In the conventional wisdom of Washington, everything turns on federal spending. So it is not surprising that when a "Stand Up for Children" rally took place recently, the explicit assumption of the sponsors was that if one really cared about children, he would support more spending on "children's" programs and, of course, he should condemn those anti-child politicians who would cut these programs. Needless to say, it is an article of faith among the inside-the-Beltway media that compassion itself is synonymous with voting to spend other people's money on the children and the poor.

This attitude permeates the entire debate over the social safety net. What is it that prevents people from falling into poverty or enables them to bounce back after a spell on hard times? To most liberals the essential fabric of the net is cash—it is making sure, through government programs, that a generous cash cushion is available. So the more generous and comprehensive the cash assistance programs are, the more effective will be the social safety net. That is why liberals have fought so bitterly during this Congress to defend spending levels on these programs, and why they have castigated as heartless any lawmaker voting to reduce spending.

But if the purpose of an effective social safety net is to prevent poverty and to restore the lives of those now in poverty, the fierce battle over government spending is largely irrelevant. Spending money on these programs matters a great deal to the debate over deficits, taxes and economic growth, but it has little to do with creating an effective social safety net. If you examine the mountain of scholarly evidence, and if you spend much time in poverty-ridden and crime-infested communities, it becomes crystal clear that the real social safety net consists of two things: stable families and religious practice. The presence or absence of these two things overwhelms everything else—and especially it overwhelms the effect of government social welfare programs. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that nothing else matters.

#### THE CRUCIAL IMPORTANCE OF STABLE FAMILIES

As far as children are concerned, there are two distinct communities in America—traditional two-parent households and single-parent households. Whichever of these communities a child is born into will profoundly affect his or her future development and probable course in life. A child born into a single-headed family, for instance, is far more likely to be poor and to be brought up poor than a child born into a traditional, intact family. The most recent Census Bureau data (for 1994) underscores this. The poverty rate among intact families in 1994 was less than 11 percent. But among children in broken families, the rate was a stunning 53 percent. Significantly, the poverty rates for these two types of households, if one considers only black families, are almost the same as among the general population (11.4 per cent and 54 per cent in 1994). Race as such is not the factor in the general poverty rate differences between black and whites. The crushing problem in the black community is the huge rate of illegitimacy. About two-thirds of all African-American babies today are born to women without a husband; in some urban areas the proportion is even higher.

It is not just that income typically is lower in single-parent households (the point

noted by most liberals to argue that cash assistance would change the outcomes for children). What the evidence shows is that it is the absence of a father which matters. Whether there was a father in the house, not the household income as a child, is more the crucial indicator of how someone will turn out as an adult. Even within middle-class households the average child born without a father in the home will not do as well as a child who lives in a home where the father is present.

Studies also consistently show the probability of running into trouble with the law is linked closely to the lack of family stability and, in particular, to the permanent absence of a father in the house. Among these studies, an analysis of census data by The Heritage Foundation found recently that a 10 percent rise in illegitimacy in a state is associated with a 17 percent increase in later juvenile crime. The study found that in the case of Wisconsin (the only state for which usable data is available), a child from a female-headed household is 20 times more likely to end up in jail as a teenager than a child from a traditional family. And all over America, members of juvenile gangs are almost entirely from broken families.

An extensive survey of medical and social science literature by Heritage senior analyst Patrick Fagan also found that a child born in a female-headed household is less likely to do well in a variety of ways in later life. For example, these children (especially boys) exhibit lower levels of cognitive development and other measures of intellectual ability. They do less well in school, are generally less healthy, are two to three times as likely to have emotional and behavioral problems, and have a shorter life expectancy. Moreover, their likely future annual income is thousands of dollars less than that of children in traditional families. The effects also tend to continue from one generation to the next. The children of single mothers are much more likely to be poor and to have children out of wedlock than children who are brought up with two parents. Murphy Brown scriptwriters take note—these problems characterize children born to affluent mothers as well as to poor mothers.

#### THE ROLE OF RELIGION

An intact family is perhaps the strongest safety net we have. It is certainly far more effective than the plethora of government assistance programs now available. The only possible competitor would be a commitment to religious values. As in the case of intact families, the evidence is overwhelming. A recent survey of the scholarly literature by Fagan found that regular church or synagogue attendance had several profound effects. For one thing, Americans who practice religious commitment are more likely to get married, stay married and have their children when married. They are also less likely to have trouble with the law or to take drugs. And children in such households tend to do much better in school than children in otherwise identical households. Not only are people less likely to fall into poverty if they have a commitment to religion, but a spiritual awakening is typically behind the most dramatic cases of people in poverty or crime turning their lives around. Religion is the safety net that helps countless troubled people to bounce back.

A few months ago I attended a remarkable celebration in Washington. The "Achievement Against the Odds Awards" dinner, organized each year by Robert Woodson of the National Center For Neighborhood Enterprise, recognizes low-income individuals from across the country who have achieved a remarkable transformation in their own lives or in their community. Dubbed "the

low-income Oscars" by Woodson, the event honored such people as former urban gang leaders who have given up a life of crime on the streets, former teenage prostitutes who are now married and finishing graduate degrees and former crack users who are now drug-free and running drug rehabilitation centers for the worst cases—with 80 to 90 percent success rates.

As these heroes received their awards, they told the audience of the people and events that had turned around their lives. Significantly, nobody thanked the government. Nobody said that a \$20 increase in monthly AFDC payments had been responsible for their success. Nobody paid tribute to a government training program. Nobody praised America's generous welfare system. Indeed, to the extent speakers mentioned welfare, it was to condemn it as having imprisoned them. But without exception they declared that their lives had been saved by a religious experience, or by someone introducing them to God. The more desperate had been their plight, the more they emphasized how religious faith had been their real safety net.

#### HOW WASHINGTON HAS WEAKENED THE REAL SAFETY NET

It is bad enough that Congress, over the years, has failed to recognize the real social safety net. Instead, it has spent staggering amounts of money on service and cash assistance programs that have clearly failed to reduce poverty and dependence. In many ways government action has for several decades actually had the effect of weakening the safety net of family and religion.

Destructive Incentives. It is now recognized even by most liberals that the welfare system has not only failed to end poverty but has also undermined the family. Since 1965, according to calculations by Robert Rector of The Heritage Foundation, America has spent over \$5 trillion, in today's dollars, on means-tested programs intended to alleviate poverty. That is more, in real terms, than America spent in World War II to defeat Germany and Japan. Yet, although the poverty rate was falling sharply in the decade before the War on Poverty programs were launched, the rate has been stuck at 12 to 14 per cent ever since 1965. And as Charles Murray pointed out in his landmark book *Losing Ground*, there has been a steady rise in the "latent poor," these Americans who are entirely dependent on government aid to keep them above the poverty line.

How could this enormous expenditure have had such a dismal effect? The reason is that in most states today a young mother can receive tax-free government cash and in-kind benefits worth between \$8,500 and \$15,000, depending on the state. But there are two conditions: she must not have a real job; and she must not marry anyone with a real job. Thus the incentive for the father is not to marry the mother and take financial responsibility for the child. The result is a destructive penalty against the formation of traditional working families for the very households most in need of that stabilizing institution. It is little wonder that Rector describes the welfare system as "the incentive system from Hell."

Anti-family legislation. In addition, many rules and statutes at the federal and state levels have the effect of weakening the family. For instance, the federal tax code is anti-family in many ways. While the "marriage penalty" is more of an irritant than a real problem for most couples, the erosion of the personal exemption because of inflation is a very serious obstacle to couples trying to raise children. In the late 1940s, the median-income family of four paid only two percent of its income in federal income taxes because of a generous exemption for children. But because of the declining value of

the exemption, a similar family today struggling with a 24 percent federal tax burden (including payroll taxes).

At the state level, "no-fault" divorce laws have helped push up the divorce rate dramatically in recent decades. In 1950 some 300,000 American children suffered the pain of a marriage breakup. By the 1970s, however, over a million children each year saw their parents split up, and the annual number has stayed above one million ever since. This easy-out approach to marriage has been very damaging for children. Several major studies indicate that the children of divorced parents experience significantly more problems in later life, such as elevated rates of unemployment, premarital sex, school dropouts, depression and suicide.

No Religion. Almost as damaging to the real social safety net of family and religion is the almost fanatical insistence by judges and many lawmakers that a "wall of separation" must be maintained between religious practice and government activity. This means hard-working and tax-paying parents in a public housing project, struggling to send their son to a school teaching religious values, cannot use a government grant or voucher to help defray the cost. And it means that faith-based solutions to property and other social problems are generally denied inclusion in taxpayer-funded programs, even though they routinely outperform other programs. To obtain government support, these successful approaches have to remove any religious emphasis, in most instances the very basis of their success.

But even organizations that do not apply for government assistance are routinely constrained or harassed by government. Robert Woodson complains bitterly of highly successful faith-based shelters for teenage gang members being threatened with closure because they are not state-approved "group homes," or because the organizer (typically a former gang member) is not a credentialed social worker. And consider the case of Freddie Garcia's Victory Fellowship. Himself a former drug addict, some years ago Garcia opened a church-based center for hard-core heroin addicts in San Antonio, Texas. The program has since spread to 60 churches in Texas and New Mexico and has a 60 percent success rate (compared with single-digit successes in typical government programs). But the Texas Drug and Alcohol Commission has told Garcia to stop promoting his center as a "drug rehabilitation" program because it does not comply with state standards.

#### HOW TO STRENGTHEN THE REAL SAFETY NET

If thoughtful politicians at all levels of government really want to strengthen the social safety net there are several things they and policy experts must do:

(1) Talk about what kind of safety net actually works. There is not going to be a decisive shift in the debate over the safety net until ordinary Americans, as well as most lawmakers, actually understand how important intact families and religious values are to social stability and improvement. Fortunately that process of education has been gaining traction. A decade or so ago there was little public understanding outside the conservative movement of the crucial importance of intact families to a child's life. When Vice President Dan Quayle had the temerity in 1988 to suggest that the media should not paint a rosy picture of single motherhood, he was widely denounced as a Neanderthal. But since then the sheer weight of the evidence has persuaded all but the most diehard liberals that single-parent households are bad for children. Even the left-leaning Atlantic magazine felt forced in 1993 to carry a cover story entitled "Dan Quayle was Right."

More work still has to be done to inform Americans of the relationship between religious activity and the social economic condition of families. Fortunately the evidence is beginning to be discussed in the media and among scholars. For instance, a recent Heritage survey of this scholarly work was summarized, uncritically, in The Washington Post (not normally a good platform for such ideas), and the beneficial impact of religious practice to the lives of low-income families is being discussed and accepted by politicians across the political spectrum. But much more needs to be done. For example, the General Accounting Office is the government's accounting arm, which evaluates and reports on the effectiveness of programs for members of Congress. But the GAO has never been asked to carry out a systematic comparison of faith-based and government-funded secular drug rehabilitation programs. Fortunately, surveys of this kind are now under way.

(2) Have government focus on family finances, not elaborate programs. The history of government attempts to create a system of social services for those in serious need has been a costly failure. These programs are inflexible, bureaucratic and, as discussed earlier, have eligibility criteria that create the debilitating dependence and social collapse they are intended to alleviate. The more profound the problems are of an individual or family, the less able to deal with them is the government safety net and the more decisive is the private safety net of family and religion.

What government can do is to let low-income Americans keep more of their own money. Thus policymakers should concentrate on such things as overhauling the tax system to make sure that families with children are not overburdened. A tax credit or improved exemption for families with children would go a long way to strengthen the stability of these families. Meanwhile, Congress needs to enact sweeping reform of the welfare system to end programs that hinder rather than help the poor.

(3) Reform divorce laws and encourage adoption. At the state level, government should begin to roll back many of the ill-conceived "reforms" of divorce laws enacted in recent decades, focusing especially on situations where children are involved. At the very least, to discourage easy-out divorce, couples who have children and are seeking a divorce should be required to undertake extensive counseling and complete a longer waiting period before a divorce is granted. Moreover, in the granting of a divorce and the distribution of property, the interests of the children and the parent with custody would be the overriding factor in court decisions.

Besides the need to make sure children are less often the victims of family breakup, action is also needed to make it easier for children without homes to be adopted by loving families. Several studies indicate that adopted children do as well or actually better in life than children brought up with both of their biological parents, and they do far better than children in single-headed households. Yet in most states there are still enormous barriers placed between couples who want to adopt and children wishing to be adopted.

One problem is that many social workers apparently are simply ignorant of the evidence showing the benefits of adoption over institutionalization, and therefore err on the side of not releasing a child to a couple. A related problem, particularly in placing black children with black couples, is that social workers mistakenly place a much higher importance on the financial resources of the adopting couple than on more important fac-

tors. Thus a police sergeant and his teacher wife of fifteen years, who are regular churchgoers, might be deemed inappropriate parents because they have only a modest income and live in the "wrong" part of town. And a further, more insidious, problem is that the huge government payments made to foster care institutions to house children create an equally huge incentive for these institutions to oppose adoption. Increasing the rate of adoption in America would do far more to provide a safety net for the children than any amount of new federal spending.

(4) Make it easier for faith-based organizations to tackle problems. Many of the barriers against faith-based approaches are unlikely to be removed until the U.S. Supreme Court issues more sensible rulings on the matter. Still, many bureaucratic hurdles at the state level can be streamlined or eliminated. Furthermore, the federal government could help boost private support for faith-based approaches through the tax system, without any hint of violating the Constitution. For example, Representatives J.C. Watts (R-OK) and Jim Talent (R-MO) have authored legislation that would provide Americans with a 75 per cent tax credit for contributions to private charities that deliver services to the poor. This credit would encourage more financial support to those private organizations, including church-based groups, that have proved their effectiveness to ordinary Americans, rather than merely complied with the minutiae of federal contract rules.

#### CONCLUSION

Equating the social safety net with a set of government programs, and measuring compassion with one's support for these programs, is a profound mistake perpetuated by the media and by liberals in Congress. The real safety net is the system of social institutions that has stood the test of time. Scholarly studies underscore the effectiveness of these institutions, in particular the institutions of family and church. Unfortunately, the unintended effect of attempts to create a government safety net has been to weaken these institutions. It is time to recognize and strengthen them.

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#### SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COLLINS). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GEPHARDT addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. LEWIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. LEWIS of Kentucky addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)